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MEMORANDUM FOR:

The Honorable Dean Rusk  
Secretary of State

SUBJECT: USIA Planning and Action on Berlin

Anticipating a new Berlin crisis in the coming months we began in April to prepare for an intensive worldwide information and propaganda campaign seeking to align world public opinion in support of the U.S. position and to generate public pressure in order to influence the Soviet - East German position.

Three phases of activity were agreed on:

1. Beginning immediately, USIA's "fast media" -- Voice of America, press service, newsreels, and television -- were directed to intensify their exploitation of opportunities provided by events, such as statements by the President, Secretary of State and other leading U.S. and Free World spokesmen, useful foreign and domestic editorial comment, and Communist statements or actions exposing their aggressive intent. A Berlin information policy guidance was issued June 16.

2. Simultaneously, preparation was ordered on a priority basis of a list of source materials covering all important aspects of the Berlin situation from its inception to the present. The resulting nine-page document was distributed May 18 to all USIA media. Our media were instructed to produce and have ready by August 21 the following:

A thirty-minute

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A thirty-minute documentary film exposing the weakness of the Russian position and emphasizing Western determination to preserve Berlin's freedom;

A thirty-minute television feature relating Soviet pressure on Berlin with Communist expansionism in Laos, Vietnam, and other critical areas;

A special press packet of fifteen features and by-liners (Chronology of Events, 1945 - 1961, Legal basis of Allied rights in Berlin, Contrast between East and West Berlin, etc.) and selected news photos;

A seven-part radio documentary series including interviews with West Berliners, in both scripts and tapes, a one-hour documentary, and other scripts documenting Western legal and moral rights in the city and the need to resolve the Berlin situation in the context of German reunification through the free vote of the people;

A shelf of some twenty of the best books, U.S. and foreign, on Berlin, with a photo exhibit to be displayed with this collection in USIS libraries around the world.

This complete background "package" of materials is being distributed to USIS posts around the world, with an embargo on the use of any of it until concerted release and placement is telegraphically authorized by the Agency. (The release date will come whenever the critical phase is clearly at hand, tension mounting, and public interest at a height which will ensure maximum audience receptivity of this entire "Berlin package." Hopefully, a major impact will be achieved around the world, setting up constructive responses in the mass communications media -- press and radio particularly -- of other nations.)

3. To build up the momentum thus generated (and the resulting pressure of world public opinion on the Soviet Union),

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all USIA media will, on a day to day basis, document Western solidarity on the defense of West Berlin and the preservation of the rights involved, and the need to do this in the interest of the security of all free peoples.

The highly successful tactic, used before in 1958, of flying leading correspondents of other nations into Berlin for "on the spot" reporting will again be utilized. The Agency cabled USIS-Bonn requesting it to inform the German Federal Republic of our willingness to assist in arranging the visits of large numbers of correspondents. The Post and the Embassy on June 26 replied jointly by cable that this offer had been welcomed by the GER, that the latter plans major attention to this project, and meanwhile is already distributing effective pamphlets and books via its missions in other countries. The GER offered to keep in touch with us on planning.

We have also taken similar steps with the British and are prepared to do the same with the French when a basic policy decision is reached.

Edward R. Murrow  
Director

cc:       Area & Media Chiefs

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